

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 IO-12

OMB-01 AID-20 DPW-01 RSR-01 (ADP) W
----- 060496

R 290430 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1075

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 4046

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CB

SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS ON SELECTION OF NEW PRIME MINISTER AND
OTHER POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

REF: PHNOM PENH 4034

1. MOVING WITH UNANTICIPATED SPEED, MARSHAL LON NOL
OFFICIALLY DECREED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FOUR- MAN
HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL THE EVENING OF APRIL 28, WITH
CHENG HENG AS HIS DEPUTY ON THE COUNCIL. INsofar AS
WE CAN TELL, THE TEXT OF THE DECREE CORRESPONDS TO THAT
SUBMITTED IN REFTEL AND THUS ESTABLISHES A FORMAL
MECHANISM UNDER WHICH MARSHAL LON NOL, ALTHOUGH PRIMUS
INTER PARES, MUST EFFECTIVELY SHARE POWER WITH THE
OTHER THREE.

2. AS ALSO FORECAST IN REFTEL, THE RESIGNATION OF THE
PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS TO TAKE EFFECT MAY 2, BY WHICH
TIME, ACCORDING TO LONG BORET' S REMARK TO ME LAST
EVENING, THE MARSHAL HOPES THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE
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SELECTED A PRIME MINISTER AND THE FORMATION OF THE NEW

GOVERNMENT WILL BE UNDER WAY. BORET BELIEVES THAT EAKT PARTY WILL BE ASKED TO SUBMIT THE NAMES OF TWO CANDIDATES FOR PRIME MINISTER BUT DOES NOT EXCLUDE NON- PARTY CANDIDATES SUCH AS SOK CHHONG.

3. FROM KHMER WITH WHOM WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE QUESTION, NO CONSENSUS ON THE IDENTITY OF THE PRIME MINISTER HAS YET DEVELOPED, AND THE PROBLEM OF FINDING A CANDIDATE ACCEPTABLE TO THE QUADUMVIRATE AND YET WITH SOME BREADTH AND FORCE OF CHARACTER OF HIS OWN MAY NOT BE SOLVED BY MAY 2. SON SANN, AN EARLY STRONG CONTENDER IN THE MINDS OF SOME, NOW APPEARS READY TO RETURN TO PHNOM PENH AND TO UNDERTAKE A SPECIAL MISSION FOR THE COUNCIL BUT NOT TO QTE COMPROMISE HIS NEUTRALITY UNQTE BY SUBORDINATING HIMSELF TO IT. BORET, AS DO OTHER CIVILIANS, ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY TENDS TO EXCLUDE MILITARY PERSONALITIES DMOM CONSIDERATION. ALTHOUGH LT. GEN. SOUKHAM KHOY, MAJ. GEN. SAK SUTSAKHAN, MAJ. GEN. SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, AND MAJ. GEN. THAPPANA NGINN ARE ALL PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS OF POLITICAL ACUMEN AND WOULD PROBABLY BE AXLEFFICIENT EXECUTIVES AS MOST CIVILIANS WHO COME TO MIND, WE SUSPECT ALL BUT LON NOL ON THE COUNCIL MAY BE PREJUDICED AGAINST THEM IN ADVANCE SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY ARE OF THE FANFMAND INEVITABLY SHARE ITS CURRENTLY LIMITED POPULARITY. THE SPECTRUM OF CIVILIAN CANDIDATES IS NOT VERY PREPOSSESSING BUT UNDOUBTEDLY INCLUDES SIM VAR (AMBASSADOR TO TOKYO) AND YEM SAMBAUR (NOW HONORARY COUNSUL OF HAITI) IN THE OLDER GENERATION; AND OP KIM ANG (FORMER MINISTER OF TJINTERIOR), MAU SAY (NOW MINISTER OF STATE), LONG BORET (NOW MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS), CHHAN SOKHUM (NOW MINISTER OF JUSJCE), TIM NGUON (NOW AMBASSADOR TO THAILAND), AND FORMER VICE MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SOK CHHONGVIN THE MIDDLE GENERATION. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, EACH OF THE QUADUMVIRATE HAS THUS FAR HELD HIS OWN COUNSEL ON THIS KEY APPOINTMENT, ON WHICH ALL OTHERS IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL SREPEND.

4. MEANWHILE, NEW AMBASSADORIAL ASSIGNMENTS ARE REPORTEDLY TAKING SHAPE. BORET INFORMS US THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MARSHAL HAS TENTATIVELY APPROVED MAJ. GEN. SREY SAMAN FOR COSTA RICA; AMBASSADOR TO INDONESIA TOUCH VOUTTHI FOR COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA, AND POSSIBLY THE UN AS WELL; UNESCO DELEGATE SISOWATH ESSARO FOR ARGENTINA; FORMER ELECTRICITE DU CAMBODGE DIRECTOR CHHUT CHHOEUR FOR AUSTRALIA; FORMER AMBASSADOR TO KOREA OUN HIEM FOR INDONESIA; AND FORMER MINISTER OF COMMERCE KOCH SAN FOR ZAIRE. ALL OF THESE SHOULD BE TREATED AS SPECULATIVE SINCE THEY ARE IN THE PLANNING STAGE AND ARE POSSIBLY SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY THE

COUNCIL. (AMBASSADORIAL NOMINATIONS PRESUMABLY QUALIFY
AS AMONG QTE ALL OF THE AFFAIRS OF STATE UNQTE TO BE
SUBMITTED TO THE HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL).

5. MY COUNSEL TO BORET WASTHAT THE COUNCIL MOVE TO SET
ITSELF UP WITH A SECRETARIAT AND TO GET A GOVERNMENT
FORMED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. HE FULLY CONCURRED AND
COMMENTED THAT MARSHAL LON NOL HIMSELF SEEMS PERSUADED

OF THE NEED FOR QUICK ACTION AND APPEARS SINCERE IN HIS
INTEREST IN GETTING THE COUNCIL UNDER WAY, WHATEVER
PRIVATE RESERVATIONS HE MAY HAVE. IN SUM, THE POLITICAL
EVOLUTION HAS THUS FAR MOVED ALONG MUCH MORE SMOOTHLY
THAN THOSE CLOSELY ACQUAINTED WITH THE PERSONALITIES
INVOLVED WOULD HAVE THOUGHT POSSIBLE.
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